

June 26, 2019

To: Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
From: Stephanie Pace Brown
Subject: President's Report of May 2019 Activities

MAY METRICS: BY THE NUMBERS

- During May, the sales team posted 1,161 personal contacts (up 26%). May sales activities generated 85 sales leads (down 15%) and 45 convention bookings (up 22%), representing 7,124 rooms (down 36%). Eleven months into the fiscal year, year-to-date bookings are up 34 percent and room nights represented are down 10 percent.
- CVB sales leads generated 53 group events in May (up 36%), with revenue of \$2,122,349 (up 86%). The services team assisted 53 groups (up 10%).
- The PR team landed 29 significant placements in April (up 123%), with 52 media touchpoints (down 25%). The publicity value of print and broadcast placements totaled \$1,530,658 with reach of nearly 4.2 million. Online placements added \$57,463 in value and reach of nearly 75 million.
- ExploreAsheville.com attracted 600,515 visits (up 29%), including 468,624 to the mobile site (up 44%). Our Facebook fan base total is 287,658 (up 5%) and video views totaled 317,862 (up 454%).
- Online hotel reservations totaled 86 room nights (down 34%) with total room revenue of \$12,655 (down 37%).
- The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 20,665 visitors (up 8%), and the Pack Square Park Visitor Pavilion welcomed 965 visitors (down 14%).

HOTEL & AIRPORT RESULTS

- Buncombe County Finance reported lodging sales totaling \$33,093,08 in April, an increase of 6 percent.
- Smith Travel Research reported hotel occupancy of 74.6 percent during April (up 2%). The average daily room rate was \$146.51 (down 0.5%), and RevPAR (revenue per available room) was \$109.36 (up 1.4%). Room demand increased 4.9 percent with 178,342 rooms sold.
- Passengers at the Asheville Regional Airport increased 45 percent to total 123,190 in April.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Marla attended the Asheville Downtown Association Issues meeting
- Marla attended the Building Our City series with Debra Campbell and the post-event dinner.
- The Sales Team attended the National Tourism Week Summit held at Renaissance Asheville Hotel.
- The Sales Team attended the Civic Center Commission and Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission meetings.
- The Sales Team presented to the Goodwill Business Advisory Council as part of a panel highlighting the economic impact of groups to our area.
- The Sales Team attended the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium CVB Stakeholder Meeting hosted at the U.S. Cellular Center.
- The Sales Team attended the Rotary Orientation and May meeting.
- The Sales Team attended the Blue Ridge Parkway Association's Annual meeting at Holiday Inn East.
- The Sales Team attended the Blue Ridge Parkway's retirement celebration for Tom Hardy (26 years in the industry).
- The Sales Team attended Grand Opening event at The Foundry.
- The Sales Team attended Best Western's Glo Grand Opening event.
- The Sales Team attended the YMI Cultural Center speaker event.
- Members of the Sales Team and the Marketing Team attended Urban Orchard's tasting and meet and greet.
- Pat attended the Grand Opening of the Foundry Hotel along with several members of the Sales Team.
- Pat, Marla, and Glenn attended the Creative Sector Summit at the Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Center on May 17. Marla provided sponsor remarks at the Creative Sector Summit.
- Pat attended the stakeholder meeting associated with Thomas Wolfe Auditorium renovation at the U.S. Cellular Center.
- Glenn and Explore Asheville hosted Goodwill's May Business Advisory Council on May 16. The subject was the economic impact of events and groups in the County.
- Glenn attended the Creative Sector's opening gathering at the YMI with Dina Bailey on May 16.
- Glenn attended the Black Mountain Center for the Arts Board Meeting on May 28.
- Glenn attended a meeting for Sweet Dreams Full Plates on May 30.
- On May 30, Glenn attended the StriveSmart Reception at the Chamber. BCTDA was a sponsor of this event.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Advertising: The 360i team has been busy dealing with all aspects of the upcoming production slated for the end of June. The media team began working with specific vendors for the next media flight which will begin in August. A full media plan will be presented to the board at the July meeting.

Spring Campaign:

We continue to see strong traffic to the Web site from the spring campaign with more than 400,000 sessions. However, some vendors that are delivering strong clickthrough are also seeing high bounce rates which will be important to monitor in the next campaign to ensure we are delivering efficiency and quality traffic.

Paid Search:

Total paid clicks for May 94,102, a 24 percent increase in sessions year over year. Pages per session were up 24 percent and the bounce rate was down 3 percent. According to Simpleview, engagement statistics are exceeding the industry averages:

- Bounce rate: 52.80 percent (Asheville was at 41%)
- Pages per session: 2.06 (Asheville was at 3.59)
- Average session duration: 1:40 (Asheville was at 3:10)

General Media Relations: The PR team logged 52 media touchpoints, initiated 36 targeted pitches and hosted 7 media on the ground in Asheville in May. Pitch numbers were high due to local outreach for the WelcometoAVL.com release and the launch of the African American Heritage Trail. Supported site visits included media representing *Home Décor & Design*, *American Way*, *Celebrated Living*, *Washington Post & Brides*. Asheville imagery and assistance was also provided to *Green Global Travel* and Allegiant's *Sunseeker* magazine, among others.

M&C / Group PR Efforts:

During May, Sarah and Carli worked on providing Asheville news, an overview on meeting, convention and special-event venues and photos for *ConventionSouth Magazine's* "N.C. Event Planners' Guide." They also brainstormed group-friendly offerings and potential interview sources for a wellness feature in *Connect* magazine that came about after Landis had met with the writer on her Spring Media Tour in Chicago back in March.

Contract Support:

As Landis headed out on maternity leave, the team on-boarded part-time contract support via Del Holston who is working in the office for several hours daily. His focus is media site visit itinerary development, story response support, pitch and press material development, among other things.

Significant Placements:

1. *365 Atlanta Traveler* | "23 Incredible Day Trips in NC for Every Style of Traveler"
2. *Billboard* | "New 'Moogseum' Celebrates Inventor of Moog Synthesizer"
3. *Edible Orlando* | "Asheville Restaurants You Won't Want To Miss"
4. *Group Tour Magazine Southeastern* | "Itinerary Planner: North Carolina"
5. *Group Travel Leader* | "Asheville Art Museum to Open New and Expanded Facility This Summer"
6. *Knoxville News Sentinel* | *Summer 2019: Here are 10 fun, inexpensive trips to take from Knoxville*
7. *Matador Network* | "7 North Carolina summer hikes most of the world hasn't discovered"
8. *National Geographic* | "Flower Power: 10 of the world's best destinations for blooms"
9. *The Local Palate* | "Eagle Street Soul"
10. *Vacation Idea* | "24 Best North Carolina Wineries"

Content Development Projects: The content team's work during the month of May focused on moving forward several projects, such as the new Black Mountain overview video set to debut in mid-June, and continued planning for new visual assets. Cat Kessler also gave two presentations at the Simpleview Summit, the firm's annual user conference in Phoenix, AZ.

WelcometoAVL.com:

This month marked the final stage of initial development for the new WelcometoAVL web platform, designed for use by in-market visitors and residents. The new landing page serves to streamline the experience of ExploreAsheville.com content for folks on the ground while also providing direct access to top-requested information such as parking, hiking, events and restaurants. The team unveiled the project at the National Tourism Week Summit and produced

marketing collateral—including business cards, table tents and window clings—to help spread the word. Initial feedback from partners and visitor-facing industry staff has been very positive.

ExploreAsheville.com Editorial Content:

- During the month of April, six new pieces of content were added to ExploreAsheville.com: a round-up of local museums featuring new and renovated spaces, an article explaining the phenomenon of thermal inversion, and four new “things to do this weekend” blog posts.
- The most popular blog and story content this month was 50 Things to do in Asheville, which received 28,494 new pageviews, followed by Biltmore Concert Series, which received 10,358 pageviews.

Photography:

Cat worked with several local photographers to plan out photo shoots for the upcoming season that would bring in assets that align with the new Let Your Spirit Run Free positioning. During the month of May, National Geographic photographer Krista Rossow traveled to Asheville to capture imagery at several locations over three days. Cat also coordinated with local photographer Erin McGrady to shoot some hiking imagery in early June.

Social Media Stats:

Facebook:

Visit Asheville page

- May saw 2,472 daily new likes to Facebook for a total of 285,739.
- There were 24 new Facebook posts added to the Visit Asheville page in the month of May.
- The most popular unpaid Facebook post during the month was a share of a video of a dog dancing at the Asheville Drum Circle. The post reached 106,818 people organically, generating 3,958 total reactions, and 415 comments. This was also the most engaging post of the month—it engaged 11.3 percent of users reached.

Video:

- There were 8518 new, organic YouTube views in May. The most popular video by organic views this month was The Spirit of Asheville, which received 1,039 non-paid views. Return Again came in second with 1,023 new views.
- Across all our video platforms, there were 317,862 non-advertising views, with the majority coming from Facebook. There have been 1.5 million views of Explore Asheville content YTD (since July 1, 2018).

Pinterest:

- The combined fan total for our two accounts now totals 5,348. Foodtopia accounts for 1,442 of those. Explore Asheville – 3,906.

Instagram:

- Our VisitAsheville account has 59,510 followers.
- There were 7 new posts in May. The most popular was a photo of Hemingway’s Cuba/Rooftop Bar Tours. It received 3,871 engagements (likes and comments).

Twitter:

- Across all our accounts we have a total of 30,837 followers. The most popular account continues to be Foodtopia, which has 14,569 followers. We continue to provide a mix of proactive response to travel inquiries and pushes of website and Instagram content.

Asheville Traveler E-newsletter:

- **Subscribers:** We have 120,580 active subscribers.
- **Opens/Click-throughs:** In May, our monthly Asheville Traveler e-newsletter went out to 121,685 subscribers. It had an overall open rate of 15.5 percent and a click-through rate of 3.7 percent.

ExploreAsheville.com: Website user sessions in May increased 28.75 percent compared to last year. May 2019 was the highest single month traffic for ExploreAsheville.com with 600,515 user sessions. Organic traffic was up 1.79 percent year-over-year in May. Referral traffic was down 20.80 percent year-over-year, and traffic from eNewsletter clicks was down 44.77 percent year-over-year in May. Social media traffic, excluding Paid Social, was down 48.25 percent year-over-year in May due to last year’s Chihuly at Biltmore posts and timing of the Biltmore Concert Series announcement post in early May of last year as opposed to late April of this year. Paid Search traffic in May improved 24.13 percent compared with last year. The biggest gains in traffic were from Paid Social, Paid Search and spring advertising campaign initiatives. Traffic from the spring advertising campaigns was up 272.83 percent in May compared to last year.

Website Improvements – SEO and CRO:

In May, Simpleview and Explore Asheville staff continue to work on efforts to improve site conversion rates based on established goals and KPIs. The biggest improvements in organic search traffic in the month of May were to the Things to Do This Weekend page, the Things to Do page and the Iconic Asheville Biltmore page.

Online Reservations: There were 48 orders for 86 room nights in May with a total of \$12,654.57 in booking revenue and \$583.11 commission. The top 5 states for room nights booked in May were North Carolina, Florida, Maryland, Arizona and Virginia.

May 2019	Current Month	This Month Last Year	Variance Monthly	YTD Actual	YTD Last Year	Variance YTD
Booking Rev	\$12,655	\$20,022	-36.80%	\$149,756	\$144,688	3.50%
Commission	\$583.11	\$866.61	-32.71%	\$6,931.90	\$6,643.06	4.35%
Orders	48	71	-32.39%	575	579	-0.69%
Room Nights	86	131	-34.35%	946	919	2.94%

Visitor Guide: There were 5,398 requests of the *Official Asheville Visitor Guide* in May. Fiscal year-to-date, there have been 37,870 visitor guide requests.

Top 5 DMAs for May	# of Guides Requested	FY 2018-2019 Top 5 DMAs	# of Guides Requested
NEW YORK	349	NEW YORK	1,856
PHILADELPHIA	215	TAMPA-ST. PETE, SARASOTA	1,340
WASHINGTON, DC	198	ATLANTA	1,267
TAMPA-ST. PETE, SARASOTA	188	WASHINGTON, DC	1,252
CHICAGO	149	PHILADELPHIA	1,114

Community Engagement: TV spots that were part of the spring local campaign ended mid-May while print, digital and radio continue throughout June.

PR supported several local community initiatives and media opportunities. Marla and Dodie met and worked with writer Kay West resulting in a Mountain Xpress story on philanthropic efforts across the hospitality community. The team also crafted and secured an op-ed in the Asheville Citizen-Times on the public good of tourism for National Tourism Week. The team also help with a response to the “Heartbreak Hotel” coverage in the Mountain Xpress with a Letter to the Editor entitled “Lodging tax supports local people,” as well as press releases to support the launch of new visitor info platform, WelcometoAVL.com, and the kick-off for the African American Heritage Trail.

The Explore Asheville team worked with Amplified Media to capture a number of industry partner testimonials at the Tourism Week Summit in May. These testimonials focused on the ways in which the local tourism economy enabled partners to do the work they love and create a life they want. After the event, the team edited several of the interviews into a 3-minute video that was shown at the Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting in June.

GROUP SALES & SERVICES UPDATE

Group sales reported 45 definite group bookings in May as compared to 37 the prior year. This represents a 21.6 percent increase. Of these group bookings, 33 were meetings & conventions, three were group tour and nine were weddings. The combined total definite room nights were 7,124 room nights, a 35.5 percent decrease over the prior year. This decrease in room nights is largely due to the World Equestrian Games bookings from the previous year. Eighty-five sales leads (76 for meeting/conventions, nine weddings and four for motorcoach) representing 21,785 room nights were distributed to Buncombe County accommodations in May. Leads were down 15 percent and rooms represented by those leads were up 54 percent over the prior year.

Estimated revenue for leads issued was \$1,898,101.00, a one percent decrease from the prior year. Actualized revenue was \$2,122,349, a 112 percent increase from the prior year. Person-to-person outreach totaled 1,161 contacts, a 26 percent increase over last year. Indirect outreach totaled 5,010 contacts, a 57 percent decrease over the prior year. Last year, a system-wide postcard promoting the Have More Fun on Us program was distributed which accounts for the decrease this year.

Interviews were held to fill the group sales specialist position to be vacated by Leann Swims on June 30th. Ms. Rachel Vincent-Rossi will start with the CVB officially on June 17th. We wish Leann the very best as she continues her education at the University of Oregon.

Meetings Brand and Marketing Plan Refresh: Proposals were reviewed from three agencies who responded to the team’s RFP for a brand and marketing plan refresh. Six agencies were initially contacted. The evaluation and vendor selection used the following criteria to make a selection: 1) demonstrated depth of experience/knowledge working in the meeting and convention market / B2B marketing, 2) experience using social channels as related to the meeting and convention market, 3) demonstrated examples of how data has been used to drive messaging and 4) budget considerations. Miles Partnership was the agency selected. The project will start in July 2019.

Sales Calls/Missions:

- Beth McKinney made sales calls on five motor coach operators located along the I-40 corridor. One RFP for 75 room nights was received. Beth also called on VisitNC and provided tour and travel updates.
- Connie Holliday traveled to Greenville, SC, calling on corporate groups to determine meeting/incentive travel potential.
- Connie also travelled to Ft. Lauderdale to attend Procurement Day with American Meetings Network, part of American Meetings, Inc. (AMI). Connie met with 11 people, including two of AMI's sourcing managers. Of the 11 planning/sourcing contacts, six were unfamiliar with Asheville as a meeting destination. Explore Asheville is a preferred vendor with AMI.
- Kathryn Dewey traveled to Durham for the Association Executives of North Carolina's Spring Conference (AENC). Explore Asheville was the exclusive sponsor for the closing lunch. Sponsorship benefits are noted below.
- Shawn Boone traveled to D.C. to conduct a client event and sales calls. Sixteen area planners attended an evening cooking class. Attending with the CVB was Mike Purcell with the Crowne Plaza Tennis and Golf Resort. Five additional sales calls were completed.
- Tina Porter traveled to Las Vegas for the Smart Meetings West National Trade Show, meeting one-on-one with 25 planners. She also attended the 3rd annual Smart Woman Summit, a group of influential female leaders, entrepreneurs and CEOs for networking and professional development. The Summit was held in the same location as the trade event. Two additional outside sales calls were also completed.
- Dianna Pierce hosted a Brand USA UK & Ireland MegaFAM 2019 consisting of 14 top-selling agents for the United Kingdom and Ireland, a Brand USA staff member and a British Airways UK representative. The Southern Sights: Heritage & Hospitality itinerary combined visits to the states of North and South Carolina, Tennessee and Alabama and was one of seven concurrent FAMS traversing the country. Partnering with the CVB were Biltmore, Hampton Inn Hotel & Suites Asheville Biltmore Area, Buxton Hall and Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park.
- A total of 12 wedding guides were downloaded this month, as compared to 32 in May 2018.

Site Visits/Bookings: A total of five independent site visits were held this month. Included were 2021 Metal Treating Institute – 290 rooms; 2019 Folsom Chamber – 20 rooms; 2020 Freeman Company – 101 rooms; 2019 One Baptist Church – 392 rooms and 2021 Fellowship of United Methodists Musicians and Artists – General site visit.

A sampling of May bookings includes:

- 2020 Outlook Leadership Conference – 1,076 rooms
- 2020 Architectural Woodworking Institute Spring Leadership – 221 rooms
- 2019 Bob Lewis Park Top Gun Fall Events (2) – 200 rooms
- 2019 Blue Ridge Lacrosse Classic – 170 rooms
- 2020 Cornerstone Anesthesia Conference – 195 rooms
- 2019 Aire Serv LLC Systems Training – 55 rooms
- 2020 American Bar Association – 180 rooms
- 2021 Atlanta and Georgia Apartment Association – 150 rooms
- 2019 Allied Tour and Travel – 50 rooms
- 2020 NC Association for Marriage and Family Therapy – 160 rooms
- 2020 Landmark Tours & Cruises – 75 rooms
- 2020 MACE Just Us Productions – 150 rooms
- 2021 Delta Kappa Gamma – 226 rooms
- 2020 Western Regional Education Service Alliance 2020 – 120 rooms
- 2019 The Golden Leaf Foundation – 25 rooms

- 2020 Southeastern Electric Exchange 26 rooms
- 2019 Anheuser-Busch – 113 rooms
- 2019 Hoffman Media – 200 rooms

Sponsorships:

Meeting Professional International's Central Carolinas "MPI-CC" Annual Meeting:

The CVB was a sponsor of the May 19-21st Annual Meeting of MPI-CC held at Renaissance Asheville Hotel. The CVB helped coordinate the attendees schedule, specifically driving visitation to downtown Asheville during scheduled free time and staffed a welcome table. In addition, the CVB prepared a microsite in advance of the meeting. Sponsorship benefits included a podium welcome and sponsorship recognition at the opening breakfast, advance logo recognition and including collateral in the welcome bags. Approximately 160 people attended. The CVB also hosted a client event (planner only) following the close of the scheduled activities on May 19th. Eight planners attended. Staff from the CVB attending were Kathryn Dewey, Connie Holliday and Dianna Pierce.

Association Executives of North Carolina "AENC":

Explore Asheville was the exclusive luncheon program keynote sponsor at AENC's Spring Conference held May 2-3 in Durham, NC. Sponsorship benefits included presentation time at the podium, a table-top display, an e-blast follow-up to AENC members and recognition in the printed program, website linkage, social media posts and recognition in weekly emails leading up to the meeting. Approximately 140 attendees were present.

Group Sales Communications: IMEX Group, the leading organizer of meeting planner marketplaces, featured the Destinations International CEO Summit held in Asheville in an online "I on the Industry" feature in May. Dan Noyce, Sales Executive IMEX Group, contacted Explore Asheville for details on Asheville as a meeting destination, quotes from staff and images to support the editorial piece. <https://www.imexexhibitions.com/insight/blog/i-on-the-industry>

Mass Communications: Email marketing in May focused on an RFP contest for planners offering a travel package and tickets to Chow Chow. The email was sent to the following clients:

- 1,306 SC, FL, TN, AL, MS, LA, ARK, and KY based planners: Open Rate: 19 percent Clicks: 54
- 907 AZ and CO based planners: Open Rate: 24 percent Clicks: 74
- 3,047 GA, DC, VA, MD and IL based planners: Open Rate: 15 percent Clicks: 112

Convention Service Highlights: Staff volunteered during Haute Route Asheville and helped with packet assembly, packet pick-up and hospitality. Eight microsites were completed in May for inbound sports groups. One visitor information table was set up for North Carolina Division of the International Association for Identification Training Conference.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Tourism Product Development Efforts:

Pat Joined Stephanie at a meeting at city hall with City and County staff leadership to discuss the Tourism Management & Investment Plan. The first Community Leadership Council meeting will take place in June.

Pat and Marla toured the new Asheville Art Museum to review the proposed naming options for BCTDA and Explore Asheville recognition. The BCTDA will be included in the main campaign recognition signage for all donors, which will be in the main Atrium. And, the Level 3 East Wing

gallery will be named the “Explore Asheville Exhibition Hall” which is a more prominent, and better opportunity for Explore Asheville than the Level 1 Exhibition Hall as had previously been proposed.

Pat continues to develop the work scope with PGAV for the African-American Heritage project work with the first phases to focus on research, community engagement, and interpretive planning. Pat has also been actively engaging with other related project stakeholders in the community in an effort to gain understanding of existing research and resources.

Pat continues to work on a plan for visitor information kiosk-type signage at the WNC Farmers' Market.

Partner Engagement and Events:

New Partners: Joe onboarded 10 new partners in May: Asheville Balloon Company, Bada Batsu, and Batton Clayworks. Joe and Pat continue to reach out to qualified partners to submit information for a listing as well as service the partners who request listings.

Explore Asheville CVB 101 Orientation: The public affairs team hosted a CVB 101 Orientation on May 8, which included representatives from Asheville Hiking Tours, Asheville Rooftop Bar Tours, AVL Lit Tours, Carla + Co, Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park, Cloud for Good, Gray Line Asheville Trolley Tours, Hickory Nut Gap Farm, Hilton Garden Inn Asheville Downtown, Swannanoa Valley Museum and History Center, and Tupelo Honey Café.

Tourism Week Summit 2019 – May 14: The third annual Summit was held on Tuesday, May 14, at the Asheville Renaissance Hotel from noon to 5:00 p.m. 160 partners were in attendance. David Rollo, from 360i provided the keynote presentation, which was followed by two breakout session options with Chris Cavanaugh and Steve Rudolph. The marketing team unveiled the all new WelcomeToAVL.com. The Summit culminated with a networking reception and an industry resource expo, featuring partner organizations: A-B Tech Community College, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association (AIR), Asheville Area Arts Council, Destination Travel Network (DTN), Asheville Grown Business Alliance, City of Asheville, and SagaCity.

Additionally, the event included an opportunity for partners to share what tourism means to them in the “Let Your Spirit Run Free” video testimonial lounge. The videos will be used to create the third installment of the Tourism Builds Community videos.

Opening Reception for the Creative Sector Summit – May 16: The BCTDA sponsored the Asheville Area Arts Council's annual Creative Sector Summit. With this year's theme of equity and inclusion, Pat coordinated the opening reception to launch the BCTDA's work on the African-American Heritage project. The event was held on Thursday, May 16, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the YMI Cultural Center. Dina Bailey, consultant from PGAV, kicked-off the Creative Sector Summit by sharing lessons she learned from communities, in the U.S. and around the world, who are working to tell more inclusive community stories. Using her experiences as an independent consultant as well as stories from her time with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Ms. Bailey focused on how telling truthful stories is often tied to ideas about voice, scope, agency, and power. The DoubleTree Hotel & Dining Innovations generously provided food for the reception. The event was a great success with approximately 80 attendees.

Summer Social & Backpack Drive – June 19: Planning is underway for the Summer Social on Wednesday, June 19. The event will be held in the Event Center & Rooftop Beer Garden at Highland Brewing and will feature tabletop games and ping pong tables for attendees to enjoy.

We will also incorporate a backpack drive in coordination with the United Way's annual school supply drive. Partners are asked to bring backpacks because that is a high need item for United Way. Each backpack donation earns a chance to win a goody bag full of surprises from Highland Brewing.

360i Marketing Seminar – August 6: Planning is underway for an all day session on marketing provided by 360i. The event will be offered for free to tourism partners as well as nonprofit organizations in the community and will be held at the US Cellular Center Banquet Room.

Projects: Pat and Glenn continue to manage the process of maintaining and updating the Wayfinding system signage. Additionally, Pat is working with MERJE on their preliminary designs to be presented at the follow-up Public Input Session in the River Arts District. MERJE will incorporate CVB staff feedback and prep for the Input Session which will be scheduled sometime in August.

CRM Audit: Pat and Joe continue to do prep for a multi-month auditing process for Explore Asheville's customer relationship management (CRM) database and are refining the approach as new listing category structure issues arise. They are working closely with Elizabeth to determine best approach to meet overall organizational goals regarding partner listings on ExploreAsheville.com and in the Visitor Guide. They will have a call with SimpleView in June to review their offerings in this area.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES

Administration: Glenn onboarded new Director of Finance, Jennifer Kass-Green, new Sales & Services Specialist, Daniel Bradley and new Hospitality Coordinator, Hannah Dosa.

Glenn continued to meet with Drew Pollick with Craft HR Solutions to strengthen the HR Department, continue recruiting the new Marketing Analyst and Director of Finance positions and strengthen the onboarding process for new staff.

Glenn met with Matt Bradley from ISA to discuss a new Employee Benefits platform ISA is offering Explore Asheville to use at no cost. On May 28, Matt and Jake Kimsey, representing Aflac, presented the new benefits package to all staff.

The Executive Office team worked together to finalize the budget for FY19/20.

Glenn worked with Landis Taylor prior to her extended maternity leave to make sure her paid leave and unpaid leave are recorded properly while she is out, and her benefits are paid.

Glenn posted the Sales and Services Specialist opening to replace Leann Swims following her departure for graduate school at the end of June. Glenn and Dianna met numerous times to discuss applicants and next steps. First phone interviews were held on May 24 and in-person interviews began on May 28.

Daniel Bradley was onboarded into all medical benefits before his 90th day on May 25.

Wayfinding Signage: Geograph was in town to install new signage on the County's Sear's Alley (Coxe Avenue) and College Street garages. Decisions on final signage for these garages were made in partnership with County staff. On May 22, Glenn and Pat had a debriefing phone call with Greg Freudiger of Geograph to cover the work his company completed and clarify the status of a few signs. The call ended with complete agreement on what was and was not completed.

Sponsorship Grants Program: Glenn processed Sponsorship funding for: Blue Ridge Parkway Association.

Archiving BCTDA Historic Documents and Materials: Will Morgan, a student at UNC-A who is completing his master's in public history and associated with WNC Archives, continued archiving and organizing 30 years of BCTDA files in our off-site storage.

Attraction Partners Collaborative: Glenn worked with Ken Stamps (Navitat) and Jeff Greiner (Asheville Adventure Park) to convene the 2nd meeting for the attractions tourism partners on May 8. This meeting rolled-out a new communication platform on Facebook for the attractions community. On May 9, Glenn met again with Ken and Jeff to develop a survey for the attractions.